

Tangled Unity: New Histories in Film and Video from Southeast Asia



Kiri Dalena (1975, Philippines)

Charles Lim (1973, Singapore)

Ho Tzu Nyen (1976, Singapore)

Ming Wong (1971, Singapore)

Nguyễn Trinh Thi (1973, Vietnam)

Tromarama (Indonesia)

Hsu Chia-Wei (1983, Taiwan)

Kiri Dalena

Kiri Dalena (b. 1975) works at the forefront of political commentary. Infusing documentary approaches with a critical edge, she situates her practice at the intersection of journalism and art activism. Her films expose humanitarian crises and states of injustice with a particular focus on the social unrest in her home country, the Philippines. Included among her many notable works are *Requiem for M* (2010) and *Erased Slogans* (2008). The first takes an unflinching look at the infamous Maguindanao Massacre, an incident that involved the slaying of 58 civilians in 2009—many of whom were journalists. In the second, Dalena demonstrates the pervasive rhetoric of martial law in the Philippines during the 1970s, by applying procedural erasure to public demonstration photographs from that era. *Gikan Sa Ngitngit Nga Kinailadman (From The Dark Depths)* (2017), continues her pursuit to uphold human rights and human dignity. It will screen in competition at the 64th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen.

Dalena live and works in Manila and Mindanao, Philippines.

Selected Exhibitions

2017

JIWA: Jakarta Biennale 2017, Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem, Jakarta, Indonesia
Sunshower: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now, The National Art Center, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

2016

Busan Biennale 2016: Hybridizing Earth, Discussing Multitudes, Busan, South Korea
Pyongyang International Film Festival, Pyongyang, North Korea

2015

8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia

2014

Yokohama Triennale 2014: Art Fahrenheit 451; Sailing into the sea of oblivion, Yokohama, Japan
The 5th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale: Panorama of the NextWorld: Breaking Out into the Future, Fukuoka, Japan

2013

Singapore Biennale: If the World Changed, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
Giving Form to the Impatience of Liberty, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, Germany
If the World Changed, Singapore Biennale, Singapore

2012

Washed Out, Finale Art File Tall Gallery, Makati City, Philippines*

Charles Lim Yi Yong

Suffice to say, Charles Lim Yi Yong (b. 1973) has dedicated his life to knowing and telling about water. Once a national sailor, he now maintains an art practice exploring the qualities of the ocean, the politics surrounding it, and the infrastructures that arise in response to both. His work incorporates a breadth of disciplines including, but not limited to, film, sound, drawing, photography, and installation. The decade-long, ten-part project, SEA STATE (2005–2015), which observes the various ways by which the boundaries of Singapore are physically and psychically manipulated by its government, remains a touchstone of his endeavors. In 2015, it was shown at the Singapore Pavilion during the 56th Venice Biennale, and one of its segments, SEA STATE 0: All the Lines Flow Out, received a “Special Mention Award” at the 68th Venice Film Festival in 2011. Lim is also a founding member of tsunamii.net, which was featured at Documenta11 in 2002.

Portions of SEA STATE, as well as a new film, finalsaba 4 (2018) are on exhibition at ART COLOGNE.

Lim live and works in Singapore.

Selected Exhibitions

2017

Stealing the Trapeze, Johann Jacobs Museum, Zurich, Switzerland*

Gridded Currents, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, South Korea

2016

SEA STATE, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, Singapore*

20th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Sonsbeek '16: transACTION, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, Netherlands

2015

SEA STATE, Singapore Pavilion, 56th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy*

Open Sea, Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France

Prudential Singapore Eye, ArtScience Museum, Singapore

2014

SEA STATE 3: inversion, Future Perfect, Singapore*

SAFE SEA, National Museum, Singapore

UNEARTHED, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

2013

In search of Raffles' Light, NUS Museum, Singapore*

Rendez-vous 13, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne, France

Dojima River Biennale: Little Water, Dojima River Forum, Osaka, Japan

2012

SEA STATE 2: as evil disappears, Future Perfect, Singapore

Ho Tzu Nyen

Through Ho Tzu Nyen (b. 1976) the past finds embodiment. His videos and installations—the primary format of his output—are populated with characters as myriad as the sources from which they come. Pop culture references commingle with citations from bygone eras in a studied, cinematic collapse of time. A work like *No Man II* (2017) performs a delicate balance between the recognizable and the reminiscent, the known and its opposite, as an allegory for the absence of the untold story (that is absent for the very reason of being untold). Extensive research and data collection is a significant part of his methodology, thus making him a historian of sorts—one with a critical mindset intent on elucidating the hegemonic power structures that have shaped Singapore's history and the history of Southeast Asia at large. This practice is reflected in his ongoing project *The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia*. Based at the Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong, the Dictionary is a platform dedicated to the subject of the region and the complex questions of its heritage, politics, and culture.

Ho Tzu Nyen lives and works in Singapore.

Selected Exhibitions

2017

No Man II, Galerie Michael Janssen, Berlin*

Ghosts and Spectres – Shadows of History, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore

2 or 3 Tigers, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany

Imaginary Asia, Nam June Paik Center, Seoul, South Korea

2016

Field Meeting: Thinking Practice, Guggenheim New York, USA

The Time is Out of Joint, Sharjah Art Foundation Art Spaces, Sharjah, UAE

2015

The Cloud of Unknowing, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain*

The Name. daadgalerie, Berlin, Germany*

FACTS & FICTION: Images of Catastrophe and Projections into the Future, Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany

2014

EARTH, Project Fulfill Art Space. Taipei, Taiwan*

Mapping Asia, Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong, China

2013

PYTHAGORAS, Michael Janssen, Gillman Barracks, Singapore*

No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia, Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

2012

Armory Film, The Armory Show, New York, USA

Hsu Chia-Wei

Hsu Chia-Wei (b. 1983) uncovers the forgotten links between privately lived experiences and broader formal histories. The Cold War years in Asia provide the source material and the settings for his investigations, from which he develops narratives that compound fact and fiction. In so doing, he acknowledges the mythological qualities of his subject matter while returning it to the plane of reality. This conceptual motivation is applied directly in *Marshal Tie Jia – Turtle Island* (2012), a “conversation” initiated by the artist about the so-called frog god who is the work’s namesake. For Hsu, the practice of filmmaking is a political one that has the ability to expand beyond the bounds of the institution and the canon alike. On exhibition at ART COLOGNE are his two recent works *Drones, Frosted Bats and the Testimony of the Deceased* (2017) and *Takasago* (2017). In strikingly different ways, these films take modern industry as their starting point for revealing unexpected cultural relationships between Japan and Taiwan that were forged during the former island nation’s occupation of the latter. In 2015, Hsu’s work was featured in the Taiwan Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale.

Hsu Chia Wei lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan.

Selected Exhibitions

2017

Hsu Chia-Wei Solo Exhibition – Industrial Research Institute of Taiwan Governor – General’s Office, Liang Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

2016

Huai Mo Village, Hong-Gah Museum, Taipei, Taiwan*

Huai Mo Village Project, Art Basel Hong Kong I Insights, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong, China*

2015

Positions #2, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands*

2014

On the Margin of Places, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany*

My Voice Would Reach You: Contemporary Art from Asia, Chao Center for Asian Studies and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA

2013

The 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia: This Is Not a Taiwan Pavilion, Palazzo Ducale, Venice, Italy

2012

Thaitai: A Measure of Understanding, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

2011

Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin/Madrid, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

Overdubbing, Sakshi Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

Nguyen Trinh Thi

Nguyễn Trinh Thi (b. 1973) passes through the traditional categories of the moving image with ease. The experimental nature of her work often combines documentary practices with poetic rumination that reflect her diverse background in journalism, photography, international relations, and ethnographic film. For Nguyễn, memory serves as a tool for accessing clandestine histories that, upon exposure, reveal conditions of contemporary life in Vietnam. Ongoing colonialism, the tenacious aftermath of the Vietnam war, and domestic political discord are but a few of her most common themes. *Unsubtitled* (2010) and *Landscape Series #1* (2013) are among the most well-known of her many titles, and the latter is illustrative of her practice. Silent and sequential, *Landscape Series #1* (2013) presents photographs of people pointing—pointing at the ground, a house, into the distance, always with purpose. In the end, the index finger is turned toward the camera, implicating both the lens and the viewer in the role of silent witness. In addition to filmmaking, Nguyễn is the founder and director of Hanoi DOCLAB.

Nguyễn lives and works in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Selected Exhibitions

2016

Letters from Panduranga, daadgalerie, Berlin*

2015

Biennale de Lyon 2015, Lyon, France

Artists Making Movements, 2015 Asian Art Biennial, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan

2014

5th Fukuoka Triennale, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

Disrupted Choreographies, Carré D'Art Musée D'Art Contemporain, Nîmes, France

2013

If The World Changed, 4th Singapore Biennale, Singapore

SOLO for a CHOIR, solo video installation, Goethe Institut Hanoi, Vietnam*

2012

ART IN THE AUDITORIUM (Artists Film International): Season 4, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK

International Competition, Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, Oberhausen, Germany

2011

SUMMER EXHIBITION, video installation, Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark

2010

UNSUBTITLED, solo video installation, Nha San Studio, Hanoi, Vietnam*

'No Soul For Sale 2', Tate Modern, London, UK

Tromarama

The artist collective Tromarama celebrates the vitality of objects. Known especially for their exuberant stop motion animations and fast-paced, rhythmic videos, the group places the sundry goods of routine life (tableware, shoes, broomsticks, and bowling balls) in uncommon configurations. Through this recontextualization we are made aware of our dependence on quotidian tools for maintaining the presumed normalcy of daily ritual. As a result, questions regarding work and industry, cultural heritage, and the political histories of both come to the fore. Tromarama was established in Bandung, Indonesia in 2006 by Febie Babyrose (b.1985), Ruddy Hatumena (b. 1984) and Herbert Hans Maruli A. (b. 1984). Since that time, they have expanded their practice to thematically encompass the overlooked labor of domesticity, the collision of private and public existence in urban contexts, and the inherent theatricality of protest. *Ting** (2008), *Belonging* (2017), and *Propinquity* (2018) represent the breadth of Tromarama's prolific output, as well as boundless energy that has become their signature.

Tromarama are based in Bandung, Indonesia.

2017

Amphibia, Centre A, Vancouver, Canada*

2016

Tromarama, Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool Biennale, Liverpool, UK*
Private Riots, Encounters, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

2015

Stedelijk Museum, Netherlands*
OPEN HOUSE, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia*
ROOT, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Kunstmuseum, Frankfurt, Germany

2014

Mooi Indie – Beautiful Indies, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, Australia

2013

OTW, Ark Galerie, Jakarta, Indonesia*

2012

7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery / GOMA, Brisbane, Australia

2011

More We Less Me, ASIA ONE, ART HK 11, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

2010

MAM PROJECT 012: TROMARAMA, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan*

Ming Wong

The cinema of Ming Wong (b. 1971) is a cinema of scrutiny. No assumption is left unchallenged, no category left unturned. His videos commence with serious play that parry the concept of identity. While blurring the lines of gender, race, nationality, and historical presence, he often recreates sequences from classic films or flavorful moments from pop culture. The three-channel *Next Year | L'Année Prochaine* (2015)—an intricate reworking of Alain Resnais' innovative landmark *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961)—epitomizes his virtuosity as a performer, filmmaker, and shapeshifter. Fragments of the original are interwoven with simultaneous shot-for-shot reconstructions, wherein Wong plays the male and female roles. At times, original and homage are indistinguishable. He is she, they are them, and just when we think we have lost the artist among his personae, he reveals himself never absent but always everywhere. *Four Malay Stories* (2005) and *Aku Akan Bertahan / I Will Survive* (2015) are further evidence that he is the master of his game. In 2009, Wong's work was featured in the Singapore Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale.

Wong lives and works in Singapore and Berlin.

Selected Exhibitions

2018

Creating Other Futures, Melkweg, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
A beast, a god, and a line, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland

2017

Ming Wong. Learn German With Petra Von Kant, The Gallery, Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle, UK*

2016

Next Year | L'année prochaine, La Passerelle. Centre d'art contemporain, Brest, France
Frieze Projects, London, UK*

2015

Ming Wong: *Next Year*, Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China*
Fassbinder – NOW, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany

2014

Minsheng Museum of Art, Shanghai, China*
Bülent Wongsoy: *Biji Diva!*, *carlier | gebauer*, Berlin, Germany*

2013

Travaux domestiques, Centre d'Art Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, Switzerland*
Me in Me, Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo, Japan*

2012

I should be like you, *carlier | gebauer*, Berlin, Germany*
Ming Wong: *Making Chinatown*, REDCAT, Los Angeles, USA